

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



www.goshh.ie

GOSHH Ireland CLG
Redwood Place
18 Davis Street
Limerick
V94 K377



2021 AT A GLANCE



6,236 Service Users



2,220 Client Contact Hours

717 Counselling Sessions

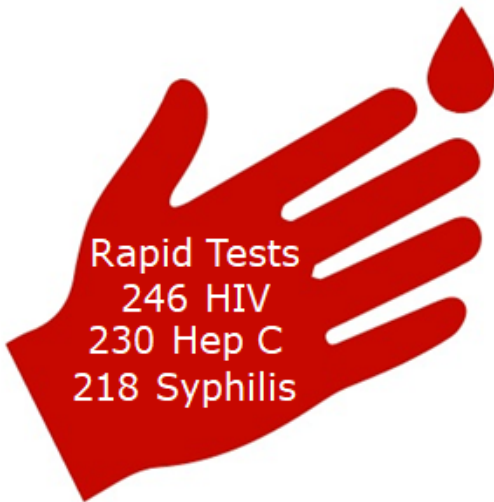
1,656 Personal Support Sessions



142 Training & Education Hours



64 Support Group Sessions



Rapid Tests
246 HIV
230 Hep C
218 Syphilis



GOSHH.ie
56,044 Unique Website Visitors



928 Helpline Calls / Emails



11,913 Free Condoms Provided

Welcome to this summary and celebration of our achievements in 2021. The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the breadth of our service provision throughout the mid-west of Ireland. It's also an opportunity to celebrate our work.

Similar to 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic played a major role in how we operated throughout 2021. The team worked within Public Health guidelines and followed COVID protocols to ensure the doors could stay open to those who needed to access the service. We continued to offer clients support in different ways - online or over the phone as well as in person.

Our testing service continued to operate at a reduced capacity but the safety of our service users and the GOSHH team was core to all decisions made in how we continued to navigate the challenges that the pandemic brought us. Our in person training events returned as did in person support groups which are a vital source of interaction for people in need.

We are seeing the numbers of Service Users increase towards pre-COVID levels and we continue to offer support to people in different ways which makes the service more accessible throughout the Mid-West, in particular for those who live a distance away from our offices, as well as those who would be nervous about attending in person.

Other achievements include:

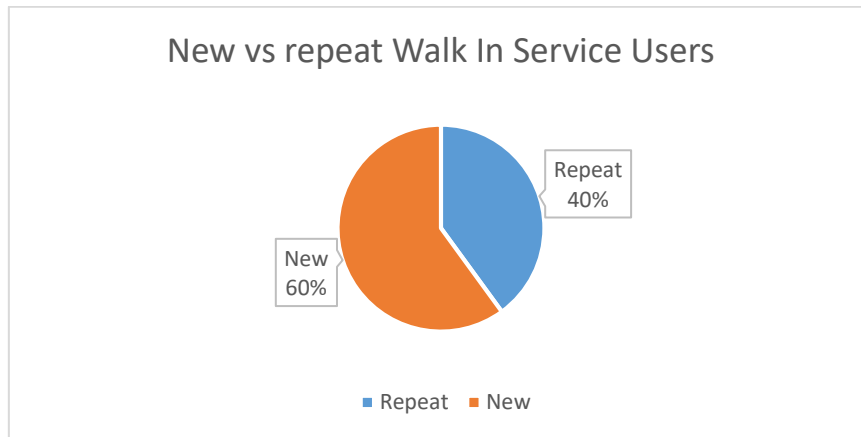
- G** GOSHH facilitated 554 individual counselling and support sessions focussing on gender identity while working with 540 service users who identify as Trans*
- O** 51 support groups for those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual were facilitated, along with 504 individual counselling and support sessions.
- SH** GOSHH provided 9 Sexual Health training workshops for a number of youth and community groups, as well as supplying 11,913 condoms free of charge. We also facilitated 98 individual counselling and support sessions on various sexual health topics.
- H** 246 Rapid HIV Tests were performed, and 130 support and counselling sessions were provided for people living with HIV.
The rapid testing programme also included 230 Rapid Hepatitis C Tests and 218 Syphilis Tests. 752 calls to our helpline were to discuss HIV and/or Rapid HIV Testing.

In terms of staff we said thank you and goodbye to Billie Stoica who, after many years, left us to join Limerick City CDP, and Sarah Fitzpatrick who left to join the HSE. We welcomed 4 new people to the team - Karina Murray as Community Development Worker, Eóin Burke as Outreach Worker covering Clare & North Tipperary, Martina McKnight as Personal Support Worker and Sarah Curtin as Receptionist.

I would like to thank the staff team for their professionalism, and hard work throughout the year; I appreciate and admire your commitment, both to GOSHH and to the welfare of our clients. I believe that your enthusiasm for your work positively impacts on the service provided by GOSHH. I also want to thank our funders for showing their trust in GOSHH to deliver a service that has an impact on the mental, emotional and physical health of our service users. Without the support of our funders we would not be able to keep the doors open and the lights on. Thanks also due to our team of volunteers, our counsellors and the Board of Management, who devote time and energy to help GOSHH run smoothly and effectively.

Walk In Service Users

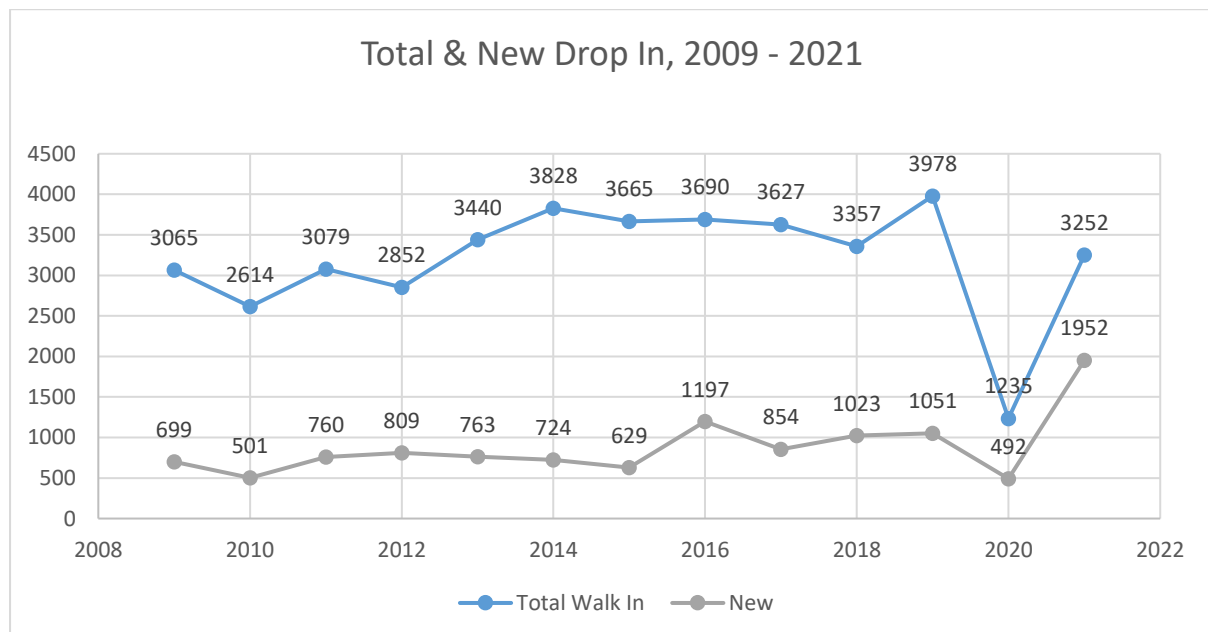
3252 service users walked in through the doors of GOSHH, 60% (1952) of whom were new to the organisation. There was a big increase in numbers in 2021 due to covid restrictions being eased.



When compared to the figures for the last number of years, the total number of Walk Ins has increased by 2,017 people, while the total number of New Walk Ins increased by 808 people.

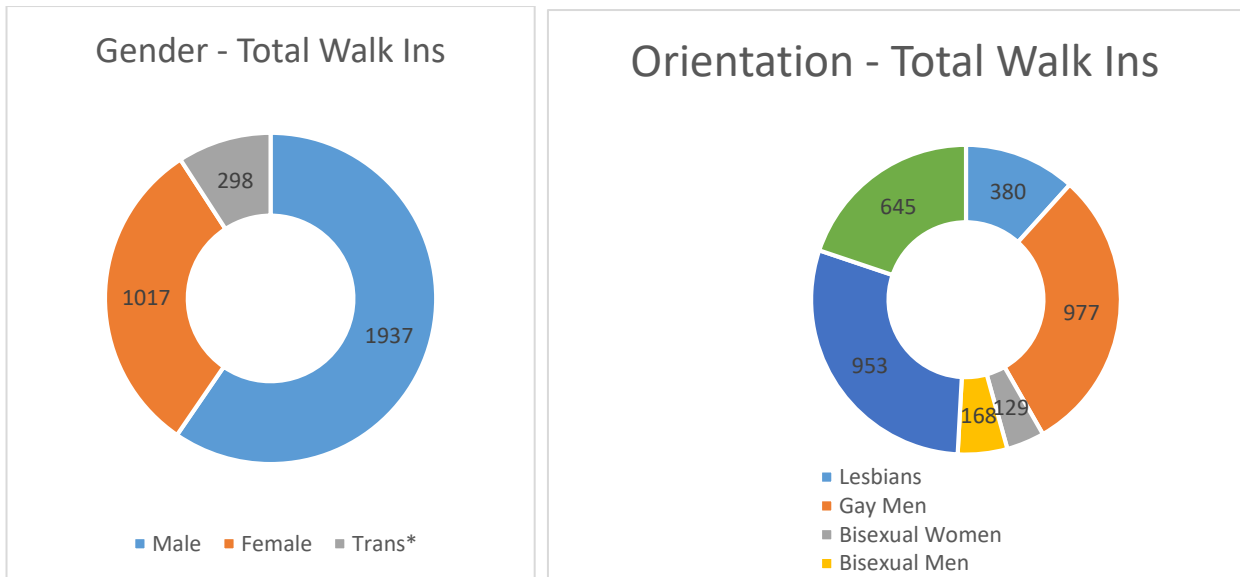
	Total Walk In	New		Repeat	
2016	3690	1197	32.00%	2493	68.00%
2017	3627	854	23.54%	2773	76.46%
2018	3357	1023	30.48%	2334	69.52%
2019	3978	1051	26.42%	2927	73.58%
2020	1235	743	60.16%	492	39.84%
2021	3252	1952	60.02%	1300	39.98%

2021 has seen a big increase compared to 2020 but hasn't returned to pre covid levels yet.

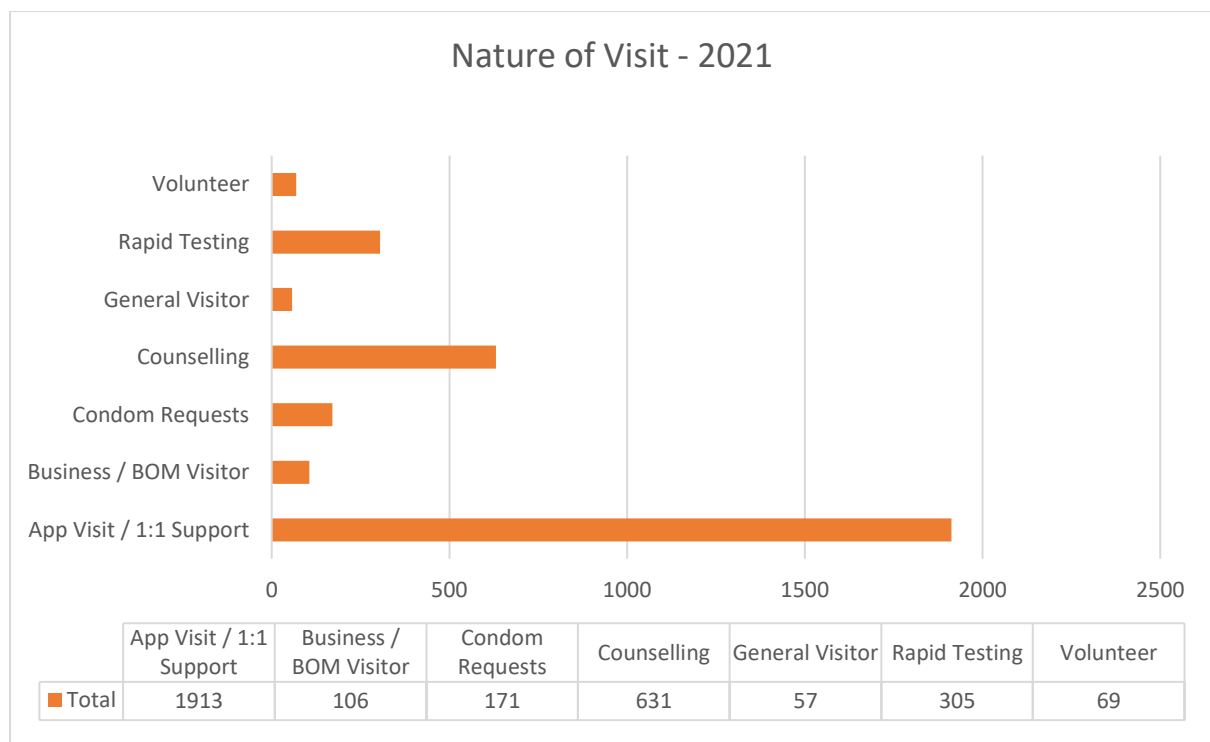


The Gender breakdown for Walk In Service Users saw a big increase in those who identified as Male (60% / +64%) and a significant increase in those who identify as Female (31% / +63%). Those who identify as Trans* also increased (9% / +57%)

49% of service users identified as heterosexual categories, Gay & Bisexual Men represent 35% while Lesbian & Bisexual Women represent 16% of total service users.



Most people come through the door because they have an appointment with a support worker or a counselling session.



The age profile of people coming through the doors has changed dramatically this year. The 20-39 age brackets represent 31% of people coming through our doors while 40+ ages represents 27% of the people we work with and reflects the work we are doing with parents and family members seeking support, along with those attending for Rapid Testing.

	0-12	13-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
2011	8	1036	664	767	355	240	9
2012	1	1163	624	561	357	136	10
2013	14	1183	790	738	535	158	22
2014	15	622	861	1145	951	211	23
2015	3	411	1035	1229	702	202	83
2016	6	424	1044	1098	875	382	131
2017	2	269	965	1037	691	506	157
2018	13	134	895	932	746	477	160
2019	20	200	1055	1008	941	572	182
2020	2	149	371	309	255	117	32
2021	33	368	736	1239	651	175	59

Condom Distribution



GOSHH is a partner of the HSE National Condom Distribution Scheme which enables us to provide condoms to the public through a number of initiatives. The aim of these schemes is to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. These schemes can also provide a good introduction to broader sexual health services, and help prevent unplanned pregnancies. GOSHH distribute free condoms, female condoms, lubricant sachets, and glyde dams in the following ways:

- Through our walk-in service.
- Through our condom postal service
- To services in the region who work directly with different population groups, especially those targeting young people and MSM. This includes outreach services, services running sexual health education programmes, or those running targeted events.
- Through our CD Card scheme for young people under 18 years of age together with training, education, and other support.
- Through the Rapid Testing Service.
- Through targeted events – Irish and World AIDS Day, European Testing Week and Limerick Pride.

Due to the rise of Covid 19 in 2020, GOSHH had to adapt how some of our services were provided. Although these adaptations were initially introduced in order to adhere to government regulations regarding Covid 19, we found great success with these methods of condom distribution and have continued them as we adjust to life with Covid.

Condom dispensers were introduced in our entrance hallway so people could avail of free condoms without coming into the building, therefore reducing the numbers of people coming into the main reception area of the service.





We also developed a postal service where people could call, email, or DM on social media to get free condoms sent to them by post. This postal service is available to any address in the Republic of Ireland. GOSHH also provide sexual health information and resources in all of our packages in order to further our message of sexual health and wellbeing. Orders are posted in discreet packaging to guarantee confidentiality and accessibility of this service for all users.

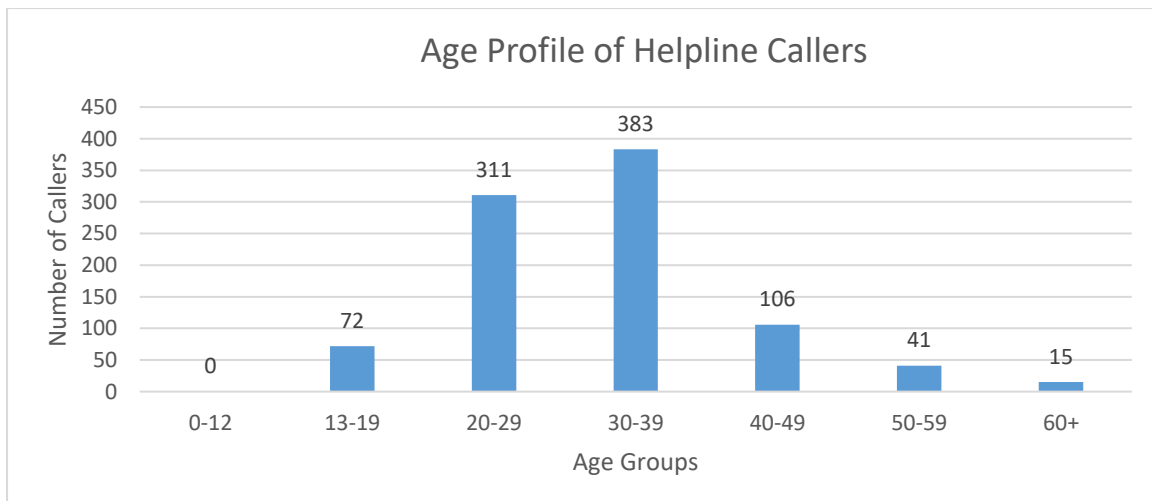
In total, GOSHH provided 11,913 condoms and 6192 sachets of lubricant in 2021.

Helpline

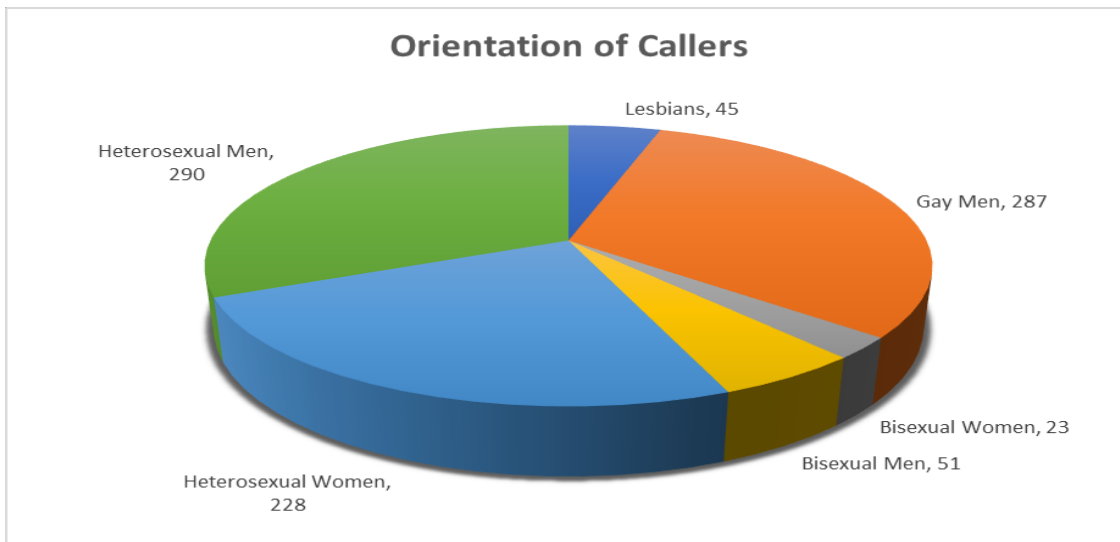
Often our helpline is the first time that people engage with our services. 2021 was our busiest year yet with 928 people engaging with our helpline service. This is 266 more calls from 2020 and may be due in part to people isolating or choosing to engage with us remotely. As with previous years, calls through our main office line proved to be the most common way that people reached out to us.

We received calls from people from who came from a variety of different geographical backgrounds.

Looking at where our Irish callers were based, 77% lived in County Limerick, 13% in County Clare, 6% in County Tipperary and the final 4% of people were based in other regions in the country.



The age range of callers we get is quite broad, with the median category being people in their 30s. People can call on behalf of someone else, which is especially true when it comes to parents seeking advice or help for their child.



398 of our callers identify as LGB (Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual). 346 callers identified as MSM (men who have sex with men), with some but not all of these figures overlapping with LGB identifying folks. With regards to the gender of our callers, 63 people identified as Trans*.

Helpline calls can be about a variety of topics and concerns. Many of our callers end up having questions concerning a few different areas of our work. People can ask about our general services, rapid testing, their sexual health and how they can best look after it. There are also more specific conversations around HIV and PrEP, which accounted overall for 20% of calls.

From this, we make a lot of referrals to STI clinics. In 2021 we referred 418 callers to STI clinics, both locally and across the country. 251 people called to ask for information around testing, which is often about the type of testing we offer in GOSHH. It's important to note that, for some, our helpline may be one of few places where they feel comfortable to be able to ask voice concerns around their sexual health or become better informed about the services available to them.

We also have calls about gender and orientation related issues and coming out. The topic of mental health came up in 17% of overall calls and is something that can come up during a number of calls and in conjunction with a wide variety of the issues people originally reached out to us for.

2021 was another year with a large number of calls for us, concerning a wide variety of topics and encompassing all aspects of our work. It's therefore essential that our staff answering helpline calls are prepared to expect different scenarios and be able to guide the caller to the appropriate service.

Events

International Women's Day: March 08

For International Women's Day our staff team took part in the #ChooseToChallenge campaign. The theme of the event was aimed at achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world. We created a video in which staff members spoke about what they will challenge to bring about this outcome. We also shared a number of social media posts with individual staff members striking the International Women's Day pose while sharing the actions they will take to achieve an equal future.



I choose to challenge the discrimination of women living with HIV

#ChooseToChallenge



Spring European Testing Week: May 14-21

During Spring European testing week we ran a large social media campaign aimed at educating people on HIV and Hepatitis C as well as raising awareness around the importance of getting tested. We shared two valuable podcasts - Let's Talk Hepatitis C with Cynthia, discussing her personal experience, and STIs and HIV with infectious disease with specialist Dr. Sarah O'Connell. We also created our own video in which the GOSHH testing team highlighted the different issues and information around our testing services.

Limerick Pride Week: July 04-11

GOSHH ran a number of events to coincide with the Limerick Pride celebrations. We offered additional appointments for testing, including weekend slots, created a staff video to share a message of Pride to all our followers, released a Podcast with our youth workers discussing all things Pride, welcomed a visit from the Rainbow Garda Car, and hosted an in person social walk across the three bridges to close off the celebrations. We also arranged a number of online events that catered for different age groups including a Pride Youth quiz, a webinar to learn about the services provided for young people, and an adult online workshop that discussed the origin of the Rainbow flag.





Increasing Visibility in Tipperary with Maria Curley: August 04

GOSHH were delighted to team up with the North Tipperary Development Company, Gay Community News and Sporting Pride to host an online discussion with out and proud ladies gaelic footballer Maria Curley and Na Gaeil Aeracha - Ireland's first LGBTI+ gaelic football team. This event coincided with the Tipperary Pride celebrations and aimed to increase visibility of the LGBTI+ community in spaces in which they can sometimes be invisible. The event was streamed live via Gay Community News and was hosted by the experienced presenter Anna Nolan. The event is still available to watch via the GCN Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXkAqTVYjrg>

Social Rainbow Walk in Limerick: August 08

We took advantage of the summer season to host another in person social event on Sunday August 08 - a 6.5km walk along the River Bank, meeting in the city centre before walking to the University of Limerick and back. The aim of this event was to get LGBTI+ community members meeting and socialising in person in a safe and health promoting space while also adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.



Art Therapy Session in Nenagh: August 14



We were delighted to partner with the North Tipperary Development Company once again to host an art therapy session for the LGBTI+ community in Nenagh, facilitated by IACAT registered art therapist Frances Hassett. Participants were encouraged to trace the outline of their body before drawing, painting and writing in a contemplative and creative process that helped them reflect upon and express their life experiences, supported by the therapist.

Tipperary Pride Social Walk : August 15

We hosted a guided social walk for LGBTI+ community members in the Thurles area as part of the Tipperary Pride celebrations. The aim of the event was to promote more visibility of the LGBTI+ community in Thurles and to provide a space for community members to come together while taking part in a health promoting activity.



With thanks to Liam from Siúl Eile and the Tipperary Sports Partnership.

Social Picnic in Limerick: September 02



We hosted a picnic for the LGBTI+ community at the People’s Park in early September - another opportunity to bring people together outdoors before the Autumn weather kicked in. Providing opportunities for LGBTI+ people to meet and socialise outside of alcohol based venues, like bars and clubs, helps broaden connections which is a vital part of our planning.

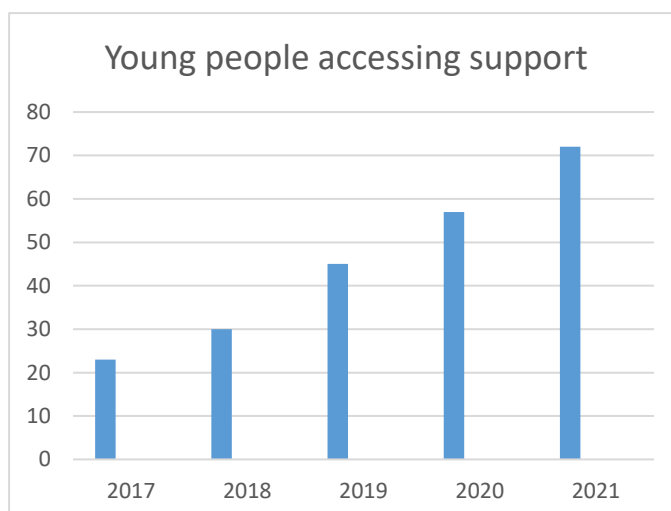
LGBT Art Workshop in Clare: September 18

An art workshop for LGBTI+ Community members was held in the peaceful surroundings of the Burren Art Gallery in Clare. This event was aimed at people of all artistic abilities. It provided a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment where participants could explore their creativity in a relaxed, informal manner. The space created a unique opportunity for community members to meet and unwind while also learning new skills that could contribute towards their overall wellbeing.



Youth Work

There has been a steady increase in young people accessing support services within GOSHH from 23 in 2017 to 72 in 2021.



There are several different reasons why these young people have and continue to access our services including:

Increased anxiety, isolation, self-esteem, relationships, coping strategies, mental health issues, gender identity, family issues, capacity building and coming out.

Covid-19 still had a big impact on young people in relation to returning to school or how they attended their appointments. Some young people preferred to have their appointment online over zoom as it was convenient and/or more comfortable for them emotionally and psychologically to attend their appointments.

Due to the lack of Trans health care in Ireland a lot of young people who identify as Trans have feelings of hopelessness, causing them to experience distress and anxiety in relation to not having these services in place for them.



Glub is an LGBTQI+ youth group for young people aged between 14-18. GOSHH, in collaboration with Limerick Youth Services, run this group every week from Lava Java's youth café.

A total of 47 group sessions took place; initially online for the first half of the year. In May we decided that we would move to an outdoor space to facilitate the group. We found this to be a great moment as it meant that the young people could re-connect with each other and build on their connections that they made whilst being online. In July, we took our first group outing to Galway, a great way for the young people to get to know each other in a fun and relaxed environment.

In October, as we were able to move the groups back to an indoor space we celebrated with a fancy dress Halloween party. Through discussion between GOSHH and Limerick Youth Service, we felt there was a need for those who were aging out of the group to have a space of their own, the young people echoed this need for a follow-on group. We then decided that Glub would be for those aged under 18 and we started a new group for those aged 18-24 in January.

Genderwise is a group for young people aged 13-18 who identify as Trans*, non-binary, or are exploring their gender identity, and is held once a month. A total of 12 Genderwise sessions took place online. The aim of the group is to allow young people to come together in a non-judgemental setting which is free from discrimination and social exclusion. The main topics of discussion were gender identity, isolation, relationships and peer support.

A variety of different social supports took place which were co-ordinated by our Community Development Worker. Supports such as walks for Limerick and Tipperary Pride, and a picnic. Social support connections like this ensure that people across the mid-west are connected with each other.

The main topics of discussion across the support groups, are coping strategies, mental health, peer support and supporting others. This shows how these groups are fundamental for growing connections and supporting others.

Although our group members were apart from each other for the first half of the year, it was essential that we still provided a safe and supportive spaces for them. We would like to thank the members of our support groups for the patience and resilience that they showed whilst we navigated a safe way for our groups to reconnect in person. It was essential that our groups took place in the midst of the Pandemic, it ensured that group members had a space where they could connect with their peers in an environment which was safe and supportive.

Training and Education

We developed and delivered a range of training programmes and workshops for professionals and practitioners as well as for community groups throughout the mid-west. Due to the nature of the restrictions during 2021 we provided a more blended training and education service. Our training for professionals seeks to empower professionals and their organisations to integrate gender, orientation, sexual health, and HIV education and information into their work with service users.

We delivered a suite of core and specific population group training programmes for both professionals and community groups including: An Introduction to LGBTI+, Working with LGBTI Youth, LGBTI+ Awareness in Schools and Youth Settings, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Understanding HIV, Understanding Hepatitis and an Introduction to GOSHH.

We delivered a total of 63 workshops. We saw a return to in person training in the later part of 2021 and we delivered 37 workshops in this way along with 26 online workshops. We were mindful of the need to provide COVID safe training spaces to help reassure participants and provide them with safe learning spaces.

Over the course of the year, 935 people participated in our training workshops and programmes. The vast majority of these (442) were young people who received our LGBTI+ Awareness in Schools and Youth Settings workshop, and 70% of our training participants were under the age of 30 years.

We provided over 140 hours of training in total – 85 hours to professionals and practitioners and 56 hours to community groups.

Our training programmes for professionals continue to reach organisations and professionals across the mid-west including those working in youth and community, education, medicine, psychology, social care, disability and many more. We collaborated with the higher and further education institutions in the mid-west, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, with post-primary schools, youth organisations and many more. The training programmes we provide for professionals address their comfort, confidence, attitudes, values, knowledge and skills.

Training and Education Spotlight: LGBTI Awareness for Schools and Youth Settings

One of our most popular training workshops in LGBTI awareness for Schools and Youth Settings and in 2021 we delivered 20 of these workshops. We collaborate with BeLonG To each year and their Stand Up Awareness Week to support post-primary schools, youth services, and Youthreach in the mid-west to join us and take a stand against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying. This week is an opportunity to take steps to make spaces safe and supportive for LGBTQ+ young people.



During Stand Up Awareness Week 2021 we delivered 13 workshops and reached 284 young people in schools across the mid-west. These workshops provide an opportunity for the whole school community to learn more about Stand Up Awareness Week as well as the range of GOSHH services to support young LGBTQI+ people to which they can avail for and be referred to such as personal support, counselling or youth groups. Information around being LGBTQI+ in school and how to be an ally to those who are part of the LGBTQI+ community is also provided in the workshop.

These workshops also provide an opportunity to collaborate with schools, to foster positive relationships and to look at ways of supporting schools in other ways during the school year.

The relationships we build from facilitating the workshops is important for ongoing and future workshops/events.

The interactions and feedback from students about their space in school, their experiences and what they need being LGBTQI+ in schools, such as more information and the possibility of a LGBTQI+ club are invaluable.

2021 Stand Up Awareness Week Training



Student Placements

Unfortunately due to continued Covid-19 restrictions the GOSHH office remained closed for day-to-day business. As a result GOSHH were unable to continue their tradition of partnering with Higher Education Institutes and Colleges of Further Education to provide students from various fields of study the opportunity to gain practical experience and knowledge in the areas of Gender, Orientation, Sexual health and HIV awareness and outreach. GOSHH did continue to collaborate with the higher and further education institutions in the mid-west by providing training programmes with various educators and professionals therefore maintaining a connection to student learning and up-to-date information sharing. Staff were also available via telephone, e-mail or Zoom to provide information or answer queries from staff and students alike.

Counselling Placements

However, the GOSHH office remained available for in person therapeutic appointments and 1:1 client support which were facilitated within Covid safety guidelines. The need for therapeutic support during this year as a result of the extreme isolation and other physical and mental challenges faced by members of the community meant that GOSHH continued with the counselling placement programme.

We had two counselling placement students who saw GOSHH clients both in person and remotely.

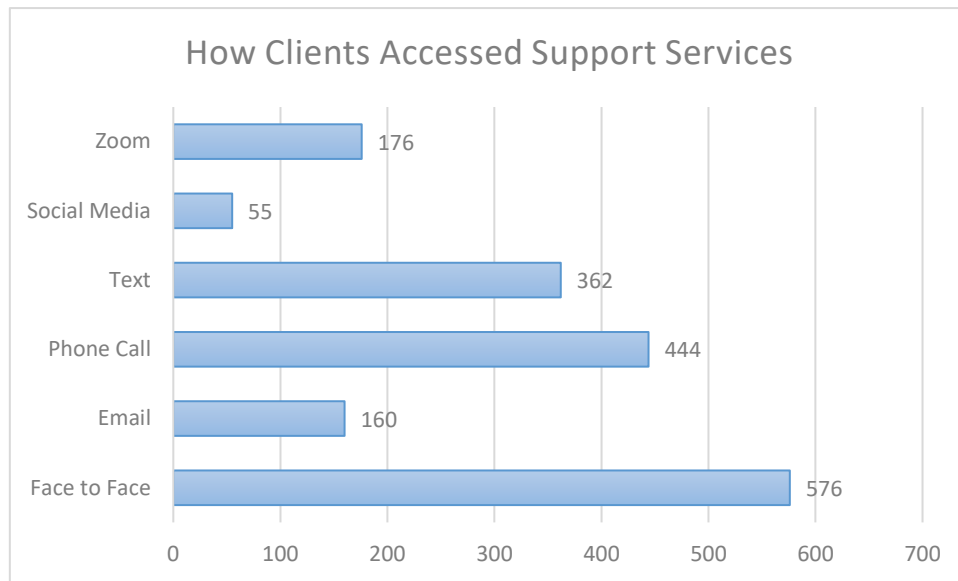
Personal Support

Throughout the year we moved into more face to face work, maintaining Covid boundaries and protocols. The numbers of people accessing support continued to increase steadily.

We had 396 clients avail of Personal Support; of these, 192 identified as female, 125 male and 79 people had diverse genders.

Support can be accessed through email, phone call, text, social media, and face to face. We provided 1,656 sessions of personal support in the areas of Gender, Orientation, Sexual health and HIV. The majority of this work was in person (576 sessions) with phone calls (444 sessions) and text support

(362 sessions) being the next highest means of accessing support. Surprisingly access via online support was far less popular.

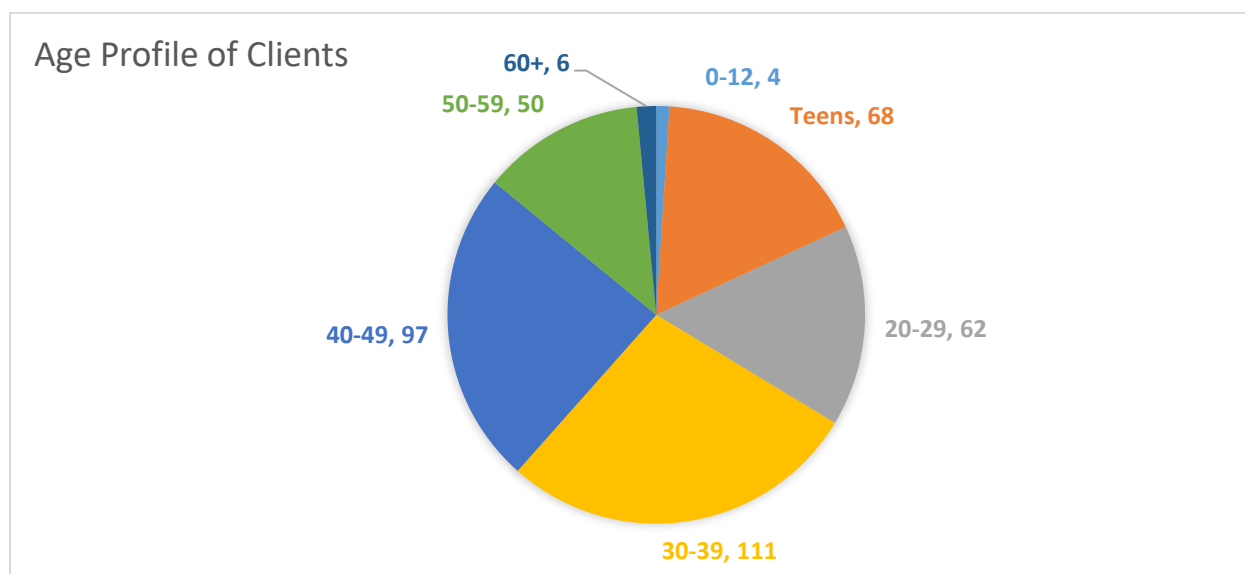


The vast majority of our service users were Irish (321) with the next highest being African in origin (25) then South American (18). This shows there is still more work to be done in promoting support services with migrant populations.

When we consider the current location of clients accessing our services, Limerick has the largest numbers of service users at 223, followed by Clare at 86 and North Tipperary at 36. 51 clients from other locations have travelled to access our services.

LGB people continue to be the highest number of service users at 171, followed by young people at 98. Trans people and parents are the next largest with 97. Professionals made up a significant number of people accessing supports at 86, followed by men who have sex with men (MSM) at 84, and then People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) at 40.

People aged between 30 and 39 were our highest cohort for accessing support, followed by those in their 40s then teenagers.



Worryingly, when we explore core issues, they seem to reflect an ongoing decline in mental wellbeing, with coping strategies (501 sessions) still being the highest pressing issue for individuals, closely followed by gender identity (385), family issues (329), and mental health (342).

Gender and Orientation:

We are noticing an increase in anxiety amongst our clients with some expressing feelings of stress and difficulty sleeping, with some experiencing increased levels of irritability. For young people returning to school was difficult with some not wanting to return at all.

Clients have expressed how the adverse local, national, international and global events are impacting them, such as increasing global tensions arising from the COVID pandemic, political movements in America, the LGBTI free zones in Poland, the mass shootings in America, the continued vicious and targeted assaults against LGBTI+ people etc. Some of our clients don't feel safe in areas of their lives. These very emotive, unsafe, uncontrollable, regressive occurrences have a detrimental impact on their mental health.

Sexual Health and HIV



Clients are feeling more anxious, the limited access to full STI screenings and longer waiting lists have been difficult for clients to manage.

The absence of an HIV consultant in our local clinic has led to difficulty for our clients and services. We have had to refer people further afield including Cork, Galway and Dublin to access services. This has led to a feeling of alienation and stigma amongst our clients.

Service users have expressed concerns around sexual practices as a result of Covid, describing anxiety around transmission that has mirrored that of the stigma with HIV. They are fearful of STIs and becoming hypervigilant around contraception and peoples' sexual history.

The desire for clients to learn more about PrEP has been evident in our sessions. We have referred more people to our local STI clinic for PrEP this year than previous years.

As people emerge from Covid lockdown, we are seeing a renewed interest in people living with HIV reaching out for support and looking to connect with peers.

Clients have shared that personal support was very important to them; the sessions provided consistency and a safe space in an inconsistent world for many people. The space has been described as being relaxed and not feeling clinical.

Sexual Health

We provided support for individuals around sexual health as part of our helpline, personal support, counselling, outreach and rapid testing services. We also provided sexual health promotion training to support and educate communities and professionals (see Training and Education section for more on this).

Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion (FPSHP):

During the earlier part of 2021 all face to face HSE training continued to be cancelled, including the delivery of the FPSHP. However, in this time, we collaborated with HSE Health and Wellbeing

(Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme and Health Promotion and Improvement) in a project to review, update and adapt the FPSHP. We co-delivered an FPSHP Familiarisation Workshop to support all facilitators to deliver the pilot FPSHP. We continued to house the FPSHP Resource Library, which is a library of sexual health resources and training tools and support professionals in the region to use the resources to support sexual health promotion initiatives and projects.

Some of our other sexual health promotion work included:

Designing and delivering Sexual Health workshops for people with intellectual disabilities in partnership with disability organisations in the region. We provided one-to-one workshops with service users and their support workers and worked with support workers to deliver these workshops themselves with the service users.

We contributed to the ongoing NCCA Review of SPHE and RSE through our submission to the review and we provided support to the development of a new Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme workshop titled “Working safely and effectively in sexuality and wellbeing - developing policy and guidelines.”

We participated in the new national Sexual Health Updates and Support Hub (SHUSH) which is led by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

Counselling

We provided a total of 717 sessions, an increase of 250 sessions since 2020. 55 clients attended for counselling; we provided a flexible service to ensure we met their needs, some clients didn't feel safe leaving their homes and others didn't have a confidential space in their home that they felt comfortable speaking in; as a result 351 sessions were on zoom, 345 were in person and 21 were over the phone.

22 of our clients were male, 20 were trans and 13 were female. 25 of our clients were between the ages of 20-29, 15 people were between the ages of 30-39, 10 were between 40-49 and the remaining 5 people that engaged in the counselling service were teenagers.

With regard to orientation, 41 people were LGB and 14 were heterosexual. Of the total 55 clients, 43 of our clients were from Ireland, 10 were from the rest of Europe and 2 were from the Middle East. The most prevalent themes and issues that were explored in counselling were mental health, coping strategies, orientation, isolation, emotional distress, family issues and relationships.

Nearly half of the clients that we worked with are gender diverse and for some of those clients, counselling was a space where they explored their gender and discussed what it is like to be gender diverse for them in their life, for example, in work, with their family, friends, intimate relationships, college, the transition process and coming out; for each person these can all look and feel very different.

On another note, a factor that played a role in counselling throughout the year was the pandemic, with the continued changes from the covid virus, led to clients continuously having to adapt their lifestyle and routine and for some clients this was very challenging as they were already experiencing isolation, loneliness, general anxiety, and depression so this exacerbated how they were feeling.

Finally, a significant challenge to the counselling service were the unprecedented numbers of people seeking counselling support which unfortunately led to considerable waiting times.

Rapid Testing

Community based rapid HIV and Syphilis testing has been recommended for improving access to prevention, care and treatment services. HIV testing and support is a package service intended to allow people to make informed decisions regarding knowledge of their HIV status and the implications of those decisions. For individuals, it allows them to make informed choices about their future practices and behaviours and enhances their ability to reduce their risks of acquiring or transmitting the infection; it also helps them cope with their sero-status which is then a gateway to prevention, care, treatment and support. The more people understand the implications of their sero-status within communities the more community awareness is raised, thereby reducing stigma, discrimination and denial.

GOSHH is one of three agencies involved in the national KnowNow Rapid HIV testing programme that focuses on providing peer led community-based rapid HIV tests. As part of our pre-test communications, the service users are always informed of the local STI Clinic. Some of the guiding principles for providing rapid testing in GOSHH are

- Testing is voluntary and free, and accessible to all
- Informed consent is obtained before conducting the test
- Confidentiality is ensured and maintained
- Testing is always accompanied by support

2021 has been a challenging year in terms of rapid testing but we managed to:

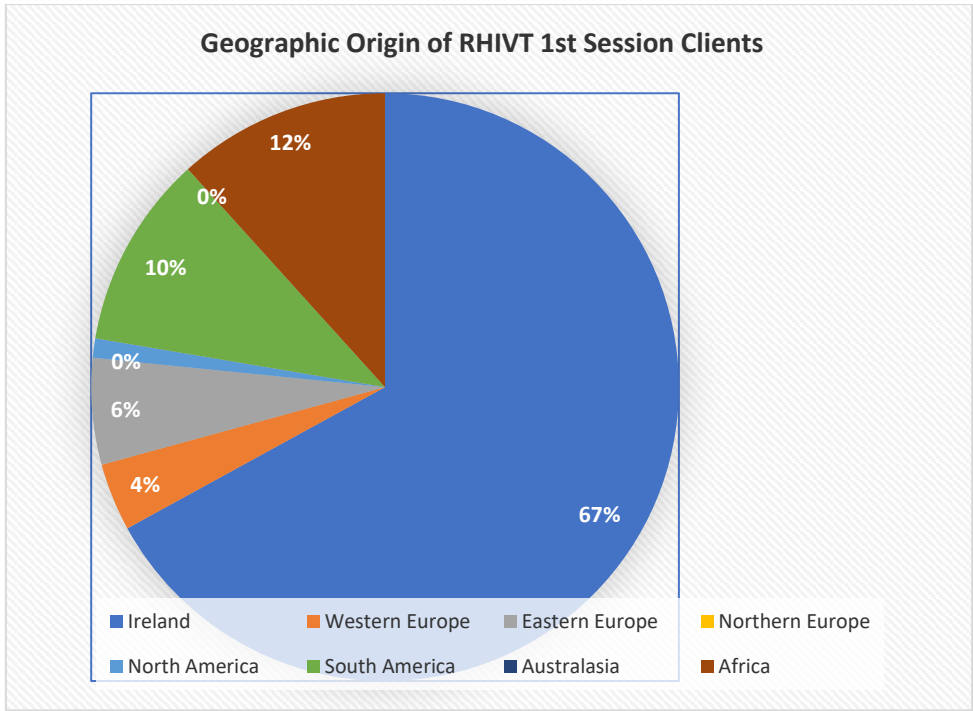
- Provide 464 tests (246 HIV and 218 Syphilis) in community settings and GOSHH
- Promote social media campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and GOSHH website offering testing services, included opening hours, how to book appointment, all safety precautions in place before, during and after testing

Know Now

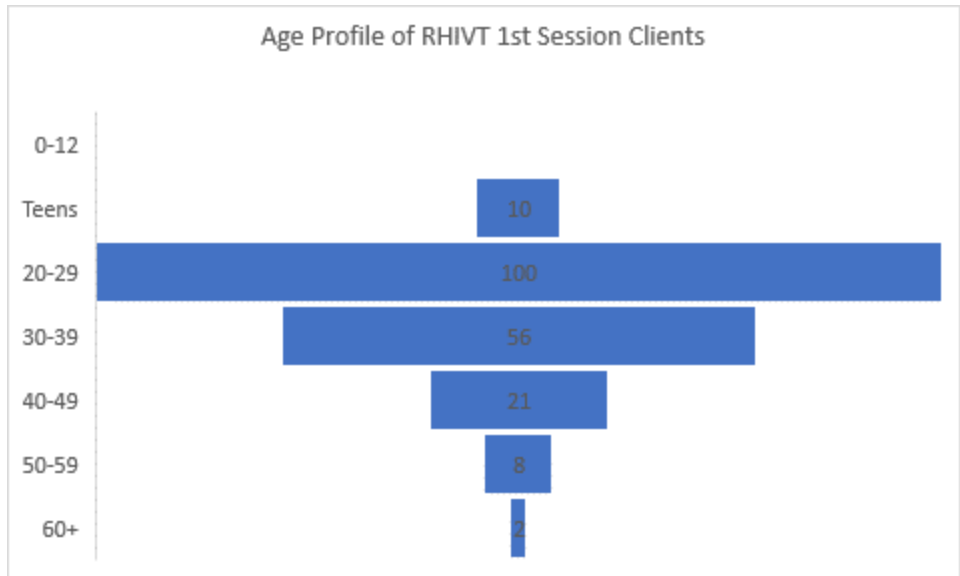


Many people prefer to come to GOSHH as their first entry point into the primary health care system before attempting the full screen as fear of HIV prevents them from making appointments and also due to the STI clinic waiting times, clients looking to access services were being referred to GOSHH by the Clinic or if they were informed of the waiting period in order to be accommodated clinically, due to anxiety they would book an appointment with GOSHH knowing the results will be immediate.

Offering testing services in other venues also allows GOSHH to be strategic and target population most vulnerable and at-risk in the community. Building a local network of service providers, rapid testing volunteers and linked programmes provide a broad range of supports in order to direct the community to key prevention and care services efficiently and successfully.



There has been an increase in first-time rapid HIV testing clients from 208 in 2020 to 246 in 2021, with Irish born at 67% followed by Africa at 12% and South America at 10%. There were 156 new clients that had never tested before and a significant number of returning clients from as far back as three years.



Hepatitis C



The Rapid Hepatitis C testing is an important part of the services we offer to clients here at GOSHH. Along with education and providing preventative information, it gives us a chance to support people who are living with Hepatitis C.

We offer counselling and peer support to assist people who have been diagnosed with HCV. If a client has a reactive test, there is a follow on referral system in place to support them through this difficult time.

Last year we provided 230 rapid Hepatitis C tests in various community based settings.



Sex Worker Support

Last Year GOSHH had 30 new sex worker clients for personal support. 13 of these were referred to sex worker services. A number of sex worker clients are living with drug or alcohol addiction either in recovery or active addiction. Other issues of concern for sex workers can be homelessness, poor health, debt, suicide ideation, as well as supporting a partner financially. Support for sex worker clients consists of one to one support that focuses around coping strategies, sexual health and advocacy.

GOSHH posts regular threads in 2 forums on Escort Ireland as a way of trying to reach sex workers. Conversations we were involved with on Escort Ireland covered a range of sexual health and sex worker discussions. Sex workers are free to contact us through private message, mobile, WhatsApp and email.

While a lot of sex workers accessing GOSHH services are in the indoor sex trade, there is a cohort who are working solely on the streets. Clients needs and circumstances can vary from day to day. Sex workers regularly use our rapid testing service as part of maintaining their sexual health.



STAFF TEAM & COMPANY DIRECTORS

STAFF TEAM

Manager

Operations Manager

Community Development Worker

Community Support Project Worker

Health Promotion Worker

Gender & Orientation Support Worker

Gender & Orientation Worker

Outreach Worker

Personal Support Worker

Receptionist

Sexual Health Project Worker

Youth Worker

Counsellors

Volunteers

Ann Mason

Cillian Flynn

Karina Murray

Billie Stoica

Sarah Fitzpatrick

Patrick McElligott

Shauna Moloney

Eóin Burke

Ann Piercy & Martina McKnight

Sarah Curtin

Gráinne Woulfe

Jessica Curtin, & Edel Mitchell

Joan Condon, Patrick McElligott

Shauna Moloney, Natasha O'Keefe,

Orla Sheedy, Kathryn Wilusz

Cynthia Cox, Declan Hartigan,

COMPANY DIRECTORS

Gráinne O'Brien - Chairperson

Noel Gavin - Vice Chairperson

Daire O'Críodáin - Treasurer

Andrew Gebelin - Secretary

Matt Cannon, Bernadette Kenny, Marianne Mulcahy,
Aoife Neary, Joe O'Meara

COMPANY DETAILS

GOSHH Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

Company Number: 237659

Charity Number: CHY11363

Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20030957



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Sláinte Ghnéis &
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Sexual Health &
Crisis Pregnancy Programme



sexualwellbeing.ie



FAST-TRACK
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**National
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HSE Mental Health Services

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



MID WEST REGIONAL
DRUGS & ALCOHOL FORUM
Clare • Limerick • N Tipperary



etb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Luimnigh agus an Chláir
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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



**National LGBTI+
Inclusion Strategy**
2019-2021



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
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Rialtas na
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